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25 July 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: Photo Coverage of Sino-Soviet  
Border Area

1. The KH-4B (Mission 1107) now on orbit should provide some useful photography on the status of Soviet forces on the Sino-Soviet border, but a camera malfunction will limit it to monoscopic photography and its image quality will be poorer than the better KH-4 materials. The following actions have been taken to insure a maximum return against the border problem:

a. The Sino-Soviet border was already programmed for priority coverage, and the NRO has been instructed to relax its camera action criteria still further to increase collection even if the probability of favorable weather is low. Standard instructions for border coverage specify 100 nautical miles each side of the border.

b. With the assistance of OSR specific targets, in addition to those within the border area, which might provide indications of hostilities have been selected and will also receive added collection priority.

c. Provisions have been made to have preliminary readout performed at EK of the border area and indications targets.

NRO review(s) completed.

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2. Because of the camera malfunction in Mission 1107, its higher altitude, and other factors, the image quality of this mission will be poorer than average. It is unlikely therefore that some of the distinctions available in the best quality KH-4 will be possible.

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3. The first bucket of Mission 1107 will probably be recovered on 31 July. If so, it will be processed at EK on 1 August and the first limited photo interpretation will be available on 2 August. Because of the malfunction the total mission duration will be shorter than normal. The second bucket probably will be recovered, therefore, on about 7 August and limited readout could be available on 9 August.

4. Each target along the Sino-Soviet border will be accessible to Mission 1107 approximately two times. Climatology for late July is such as to yield a relatively high probability (75 percent) of obtaining clear photography of western portions of the border area with successive degradation likely to occur eastward from Mongolia through the Soviet Far East where the average probability of clear weather will be about 30 percent.

5. Owing to the generally marginal outlook for this mission, there appears to be little advantage to accelerating recovery of either bucket. The presence of a team at EK will provide the fastest possible preliminary readout and the necessary steps will be taken to expedite the film to NPIC for more thorough exploitation.

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